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Post-Tribune

Fire code hearing continues

May 6, 2008

Recommend

By [DIANE KRIEGER SPIVAK](#) Post-Tribune staff writer

A hearing to decide whether Kidz World day-care center in Lowell will be allowed to remain open while it comes into compliance with fire codes by June 1 will continue today.

Ilene and Tom Cresap, who own the business at 410 E. Commercial Ave., appeared before Lake Circuit Court Judge Richard McDevitt on Monday to seek a permanent injunction to keep the town from closing the building.

Ilene Cresap testified that the Lowell Fire Department inspected and OK'd the building for occupancy.

She said their landlord, Carl Ferro, told them the building was fine for a day-care center.

"Carl told us it was fine, within the two-hour (fire) rating," she said.

But when the couple approached the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, which handles fire safety codes, about obtaining an occupancy permit, an inspection by the department revealed some code violations.

The state gave the Cresaps until June 1 to comply, Donald LeBrun, assistant director for the state's Fire and Building Code Enforcement, said.

The town, however, imposed an April 25 deadline because the center was still operating.

LeBrun testified that the state mandates that local municipalities enforce control code issues.

"We cannot exert local authority," Lebrun said, regarding the state's June 1 deadline.

The Cresaps' attorney, Kevin Werner, said the town spoke out of both sides of its mouth and was unhappy with approvals given by state and local inspectors, setting an "artificial" deadline of April 25.

Ilene Cresap testified that when she and her husband approached Ferro about making the necessary improvements, Ferro "got mad and started threatening us and wanted to raise our rent. He wouldn't talk to us," she said.

Town attorney George Patrick said the state never notified the Lowell Fire Department that there was any other review of the building.

The hearing continues today.

Contact Diane Krieger Spivak at 648-3076 or dspivak@post-trib.com. Comment on this story at www.post-trib.com

[**Return to Building Safety**](#)

May 7, 2008

Winding Ridge works to fix code violations

By Cathy Kightlinger
cathy.kightlinger@indystar.com

Lawrence Township Schools officials are working to resolve state fire and building safety code violations in the Early Learning Center at Winding Ridge.

The violations -- which include electrical problems -- don't pose any immediate threat to students, officials say.

"The fire marshall did indicate to us that there was nothing they found in the inspection that posed any life-safety issue," said Ed Williams, assistant superintendent.

"So, this work can be completed even while school is in session."

Winding Ridge, which enrolls about 280 of the district's youngest students, is one of four early learning centers in the township. All opened in 2006.

The same firm performed electrical work in all the centers, so inspections are expected at Amy Beverland, Brook Park and Mary Castle, too.

According to township Fire Marshal Dick Groves, problems found at Winding Ridge last month include:

- » Uncovered fireproof junction boxes. Electrical wiring for buildings join together in such boxes, where covers are required to prevent the spread of fire if a short occurs.

- » Unfilled or improperly filled holes where electrical wiring runs through firewalls. Contractors are required to fill around the wiring with fireproof caulking. In some places, the caulking is missing or insufficient.

Combustible materials were improperly stored in a mechanical room, and electrical wiring inside breaker panels had been spliced, which is not allowed.

The local inspection that highlighted the problems April 14 also involved a state inspector from the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

Design Electric, a Texas-based firm with an Indianapolis office, did the electrical work. The company now operates as Facility Solutions Group.

The firm's contract was terminated more than a year ago, and a substantial amount of money was withheld, said its president, Bill Graham. But he said he has been told the contract is being reinstated as the company resumes work.

"It's real normal for an inspector to say 'you missed this, you missed that,' " said Graham, whose

employees were working at Winding Ridge last week. "If we were aware, we would have made repairs. . . . I'm just real frustrated about this. They were in there working with them, and they chose to cancel our contract, so we were then off the job."

Williams said the contract never was terminated officially.

Parents were notified of the issues at Winding Ridge, said School Board President Lori Petrucciani.

Jimmy Beard, hired by the district to review electrical work, told board members of the concerns before township and state fire authorities were called in, Petrucciani said. She added that administrators were aware of some problems before Beard spotlighted them, but she had been told the administration was handling them.

"I am also concerned that the fire marshal was not contacted to rectify these electrical concerns when they were first brought to the township's attention," said Petrucciani.

"I have to take responsibility, too, because I am on the School Board, but I don't feel like I was informed of the magnitude of the situation."

Petrucciani, who last month requested the inspection by fire marshals, said she doesn't understand how the building was allowed to open if violations existed. Winding Ridge was inspected then, she said.

By the time of the final inspection, officials would not be looking above ceiling panels or opening electrical boxes, as was done in the April inspection, Williams said.

[*Return to Building Safety*](#)

Tuesday, May 06, 2008

Indiana Live! plans outdoor concerts, fireworks in summer

Ron Hamilton
Staff writer

Tuesday, May 06, 2008

C.J. "Chris" Miller, the marketing events coordinator for Indiana Live!, talked to city officials Monday evening about the casino's plans to host outdoor concerts and fireworks events this summer.

"We are planning on some gala celebrations this summer, including outdoor music concerts and fireworks displays, hopefully coinciding with the Fourth of July summer holiday season," Miller told members of the Shelbyville Board of Public Works and Safety.

"On behalf of casino general manager Mark Hammerle, we want to make certain that we follow all city ordinances, accepted procedures and protocols and that we are on the same page with the city attorney, police chief and other city officials. We want to be good neighbors," Miller said.

Mayor Scott Furgeson assured Miller that city officials would work closely with the casino to make sure all local, county and state ordinances and statutes were followed. He reminded Miller, however, that the city does have an 11 p.m. loud-noise curfew.

Miller told city officials that would not present a problem to the casino because it plans to stage 20-minute fireworks celebrations no earlier than 9:45 p.m. and end no later than 11. He noted that any fireworks displays would involve a close cooperation between the nationally known fireworks company, Melrose Pyrotechnics, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, the state fire marshal and the Shelbyville Fire Department. He added that the proposed concert and fireworks plans were "still in the early stages."

"We have nothing definite lined up as of yet," he said. "We're just formulating plans, and we want to make sure we establish good communication and cooperation with you."

[Return to Building Safety](#)

10:45 p.m.: Fatal fire started on couch

By Jason M. White

Wed, May 07 2008

— ALEXANDRIA — A fatal apartment fire started on a living room couch, and investigators found an open Zippo lighter nearby, city fire officials said.

State and local fire officials Wednesday were continuing their investigation of a fire that killed a mother and her two children and hospitalized her fiance and their infant daughter. The fire was Sunday morning at 201 N. Sheridan St. Apt. B.

Erin Williams, 27, Brydin Tracy, 2, and Brisyn Tracy, 4, died from injuries suffered in the fire. Williams' fiance, Barry Tracy, 27, was in serious condition at Wishard Hospital in Indianapolis Wednesday, and their infant daughter was in stable condition at Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis.

The fire's point of origin was the living room couch, and investigators found an open Zippo nearby, Alexandria Fire Department Capt. Jim King said. But they had not determined whether the Zippo started the fire, he said.

Family members had heard rumors that cigarettes were to blame, but this could not be true, said Alexandria resident Jamie Williams, Erin Williams' brother. Erin Williams and Barry Tracy did smoke, but never inside, and never around their kids, Jamie Williams said.

The fire was being investigated as an accident, according to city police. The Indiana State Fire Marshal's office is analyzing carpet samples from the apartment to help determine exactly how the fire started, Alexandria Fire Chief Bruce Waters has said.

What remains unclear is whether a smoke detector in the apartment was functioning. The fire's severe heat melted the device, so investigators could not tell if it was on or working, according to police. Landlord Brad Hayes was not available for comment.

State fire officials did not want to put a timeline on fire investigations, because they did not want to rush the process, said Rick Batza, chief of investigations for the Indiana State Fire Marshal's office, a part of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

Investigators narrowed down the fire's origin by following burn patterns along the walls and floor.

The blaze started in the living room and spread to the kitchen, Waters said. Flames lashed out from the living room window in front of the building, but did not spread to the other apartment in the one-story duplex, Waters said.

Bystanders called 911 at 10:20 a.m. and told the dispatcher they heard a baby crying and screaming from within the apartment.

They kicked in the rear door to enter the apartment but could not get inside because of thick smoke and intense heat, according to police reports.

Police arrived at the scene at 10:21 a.m. and tried to get inside through the rear door as well, but the smoke and heat created an impassable barrier, police reports said.

The fire department arrived at 10:22 a.m. and spent about 40 minutes extinguishing the flames. The family was asleep at the time of the fire, Waters said.

Williams and Elysah Tracy were rescued from the apartment's east bedroom, and Barry Tracey, Bryden Tracey and Brisyn Tracy were in the west bedroom, Waters said.

Funeral services are scheduled for 2 p.m. Tuesday for Williams, Brydin Tracy and Brisyn Tracy. The funeral is at Daleville United Methodist Church.

How to help the fire survivors

A mother and two of her children died after an Alexandria house fire Sunday. Her fiance and 2-week-old daughter survived, but were hospitalized. Her fiance also has an 8-year-old daughter who was spending the night with her grandmother at the time of the fire.

The families of the victims have set up a trust fund:

- ☐ Williams-Tracy Family Trust Fund
- ☐ Independent Federal Credit Union
- ☐ To the attention of the Tracy family
- ☐ Routing number: 274972579
- ☐ Account number: 692152
- ☐ Bank phone number: (765) 649-9271

Survivors' status as of Wednesday

- Barry Tracy, 27: serious condition.
- Elysah Tracy, 2 weeks old: stable condition.

Funeral services

Services are scheduled for 2 p.m. Tuesday for Erin Williams, 27, Brydin Tracy, 2, and Brisyn Tracy, 4, who died from injuries suffered during the fire. The funeral is at Daleville United Methodist Church.

[**Return to Fire**](#)



September trial set in teen's arson case

THE STAR PRESS

MUNCIE — A teenage volunteer firefighter pleaded not guilty Monday to setting a vacant house near Selma on fire last month.

Adam M. Waters, 18, is charged with arson, a Class B felony carrying a standard 10-year prison term. He is accused of setting fire to a house at 1104 N. Delaware County Road 650-E on April 20.

According to court records, Timothy Murray, an investigator for the Indiana State Fire Marshal, interviewed Waters, a rookie with the Liberty-Perry Township Fire Department, after he was identified as a suspect.

Waters gave a statement, saying he splashed kerosene on the walls of the residence and used a lighter to ignite the fire.

Waters, a Wapahani High School student, was released from the Delaware County jail Monday after posting a \$15,000 bond.

Defense attorney Jill Gonzalez said she was negotiating with the prosecutor's office, saying her client was "only a kid" and a first-time offender.

Circuit Court 4 Judge John Feick set the teen's trial for Sept. 29.

[**Return to Fire**](#)



May 3, 2008

Fire destroys rental property

PALLADIUM-ITEM

FOUNTAIN CITY, Ind. -- Firefighters from seven volunteer fire departments responded to a fire northeast of here Friday that destroyed a rental property.

No one was hurt in the fire, which was reported at 6:15 p.m., at 9421 Elliott Road, said Trent Mote, chief of the Hollansburg, Ohio, volunteer fire department. Byron Banta of Muncie owned the house, he said.

"There were heavy flames showing throughout half the structure outside" when we arrived," Mote said. "The wind just got it and it just ripped through it."

Bob Bailey, who with his wife, Lori, rented the home, reported to firefighters that he was in a barn outside of the house when he noticed smoke coming from a window. He ran to a neighbor's house to call for help, Mote said.

An investigator from the Indiana Fire Marshal's office was called to the scene, firefighters said.

The American Red Cross was expected to provide support to the Bailey family, Mote said. In addition to Hollansburg, firefighters from Webster, Williamsburg, Lynn, New Madison, Ohio and Liberty Township responded to the fire.

Reporter Brian Zimmerman: (765) 973-4478 or bxzimmer@pal-item.com

[Return to Fire](#)



FEMA Reverses Decision on Flood Assistance in Northern Ind.

Publicado - Published: 01/05/2008

INDIANAPOLIS (AP).- Government buildings and other property damaged by flooding in 13 northern Indiana counties this winter will get federal help after all.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency reversed an earlier decision and will pay 75% of the damages that qualify for assistance.

The state says the flooding that began January 7th caused more than \$33 million damage overall to privately owned and public property. FEMA changed its ruling after an appeal by Governor Daniels.

The state also provided more information, showing the affected county governments had sustained at least \$7.5 million. John Erickson, an Indiana Department of Homeland Security spokesman, says the actual amount reimbursed will depend on complex formulas used by FEMA.

The affected counties are Benton, Carroll, Cass, DeKalb, Elkhart, Jasper, Kosciusko, Marshall, Newton, Noble, Pulaski, Starke and White.

[**Return to Flooding**](#)

Big turnout at Jasper's Earthquake Planning Workshop

Updated: May 7, 2008 08:23 AM EDT

Reporter: [Chad Sewich](#)

Web Producer: [Mike Mardis](#)

Recent earthquakes have raised the urgency level to be prepared for what emergency planners call 'The Big One.'

A two-day conference on preparedness began Tuesday in Jasper. There is no warning and they happen in an instant. That makes planning for a catastrophic earthquake a difficult task at best.

"There is frequent activity along those seismic areas, but for the most part they're not large enough to get our attention like they were the other day," Joe Wainscott, Director of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, said.

After the April 18 quake near Mount Carmel, sign-ups for the earthquake workshop in Jasper nearly doubled. Everyone from emergency managers to road crew supervisors said the tremors have given the conference a more urgent tone.

"Our geology in Indiana and the midwest is such that smaller magnitude quakes can cause much more extensive problems throughout the area," Wainscott said.

Sherman Greer, Vanderburgh County EMA Director said, "We're looking at how we can beef up our plans, work together and expect the unexpected."

There's plenty to talk about how to deal with it all.

"Water facilities, sewers, hospitals, E.M.S., mass casualty, shelter, lots of people displaced, what to do with all those people, a lot of coordination," Ken Zuber, Evansville Fire Chief said.

Everyone here knows they can only do so much. Preparation starts at home.

"Everyone should have a plan within their own home," Greer said, "Have a disaster supply kit to take care of yourself for a minimum of three days."

The Earthquake Planning Workshop continues Wednesday.

[**Return to IDHS**](#)



IBC student wins state scholarship

Selma's Connie Swingley was one of 14 students to receive a \$2,000 scholarship from the Indiana Homeland Security Foundation last month.

The scholarships were given to 14 students interested in pursuing careers in public safety.

Swingley is attending Indiana Business College for a bachelor's degree in healthcare management. She would like to work in healthcare and is considering a career in emergency management. She is the daughter of Gene and Dorothy Glaze.

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Published: May 01, 2008 11:50 pm

Simulated life-saving rescue helps open new training facility

By Arthur E. Foulkes

The Tribune-Star

TERRE HAUTE — As smoke poured from an upper-story window, firefighters carefully handed "Rescue Randy" — a rescue dummy — through an open window to waiting firefighters outside.

In a few moments, the high-angle rescue ladder was level with the ground and Randy was taken away by paramedics standing by.

The simulated life-saving rescue was part of the official grand opening Thursday of Terre Haute's new Emergency Responder Training Academy on North Brown Avenue.

"This is a beautiful facility," said Bill Newgent, Greencastle fire chief and chairman of training for the Region 7 Training Council. "The most important thing about this is firefighter safety," he said.

The new training facility stands 40 feet tall and 25 feet long. It is designed to provide a variety of fire, police and other emergency response training exercises.

"We used to have to try and find abandoned houses to train in," said Terre Haute Fire Chief Jeff Fisher. The new facility, which is northwest of North Vigo High School, allows firefighters to train in a clean, safe environment, he said. "We have a training facility here that is second to none."

After the official opening of the facility Thursday, members of the Terre Haute Fire Department conducted their rescue of "Rescue Randy" and members of Task Force 7 high-angle rescue team rappelled down the side of the building from atop the facility's 40-foot tower.

Other events scheduled Thursday morning included a Terre Haute Police Department K-9 demonstration, a police special response team demonstration and a live fire chamber demonstration.

The facility is the largest steel-frame training structure in Indiana, said Norm Loudermilk, a Terre Haute firefighter and member of the City Council.

Loudermilk, who directed the grand opening ceremony, spearheaded efforts to bring the training facility to Terre Haute.

As part of Thursday's ceremony, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security presented a grant of \$100,000 to the Terre Haute Fire Department to help expand its training capabilities.

The new facility will serve as a training site for all of Task Force 7, which includes emergency responders from Clay, Greene, Owen, Parke, Putnam, Sullivan, Vermillion and Vigo counties.

Task Force 7 has "done a fantastic job," said Brad Thatcher, director of training for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security. They have set the standard for other task forces in the state, he said.

The Terre Haute Police Department will use the facility for K-9, SWAT, hostage rescue, drug search and "active shooter" training, said Police Chief John Plasse. "The possibilities here are just tremendous," he said.

The new training facility is the first phase of a multi-phase project, Loudermilk said. The new facility sits on 10 acres, but there are plans to add more facilities and perhaps more acreage, he said.

"This is great but we can do better," Fisher said.

"We have a lot to be proud of," said Jeff Lee with the International Tactical Officers Training Association, which presented a check for \$25,000 for use at the facility.

"The secret of training is to make it as real as possible," he said. The new Region 7 training facility simulates real firefighting situations, he said.

"They can have a fire going full bore in there" and fill rooms with smoke, he said. "It really is amazing."

Arthur Foulkes can be reached at (812) 231-4232 or arthur.foulkes@tribstar.com.

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